DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 214 CG 027 131

AUTHOR Gallagher, Shawn L.
TITLE Adolescents' Perceived Sense of Belonging.
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 104p.; Master's Thesis, Fort Hays State University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescent Development; Adolescents; Family Relationship; High Schools; High School Students; *Interpersonal Relationship; Loneliness; *Peer Acceptance; *Self Esteem; Social Attitudes; Social Desirability; *Social Development; Social Life; Student Development
IDENTIFIERS *Belongingness

ABSTRACT

Adolescents' feelings of belongingness were investigated by this study, in which 349 high school students participated. Independent variables for family structure, quality of family life, gender, classification, and length of residency were investigated. The dependent variable was scores from the Psychological Sense of School Membership scale. Results appear to support the following generalizations: (1) seniors have greater feelings of belonging than freshmen; (2) students who had lived in the community all their lives, or two or more years, have greater feelings of belonging than those who lived in the community less than two years; (3) family structure and quality of family life should be interpreted concurrently; and (4) students have above-typical feelings of belonging. Seven appendices present facsimiles of letters to school officials, memos to seminar teachers, instructions and the demographic sheet giving to each student participant, the Psychological Sense of School Membership Inventory, and the Personal Attribute Inventory--Family. Contains 40 references. (TS)

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ED 396 214

ADOLESCENTS' PERCEIVED SENSE OF BELONGING

being

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the Fort Hays State University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science

by

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Acknowledgments

The researcher wishes to gratefully acknowledge the members of my graduate committee whose time and assistance made the completion of this thesis a reality:

Dr. Daley, for his statistical and research design expertise and the many hours spent in "right-brain" translation,

Dr. Guss, the quintessential gentle man, whose demeanor, professionalism, and understanding of the human spirit I will always strive to emulate,

Dr. Stalling, whose accomplishments and natural leadership are a credit and inspiration to our gender,

Dr. Stansbury, the bulwark of the Counseling Graduate Program, who is special advocate and mentor to school counselors, and

Dr. Murphy, whose heart-warming smile and genuine interest were always great stress antidotes for me.

Finally, I wish to dedicate this work to my children, Andrew, Adam and Ashley, through whose hearts and souls I have come to know the wonder of childhood and the immeasurable joy of simple wisdom. Long may you run!

Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Self and Self-Esteem	2
Self and Sense of Belonging	2
Peer Acceptance and a Sense of Belonging	7
Family Environment and a Sense of Belonging	14
Family relationships	14
Affiliation	15
Communication	16
Time	18
Support	19
Family resources	21
Parenting approaches	24
Non-traditional families	25
Father absence	28
Socioeconomic status	30
Conflict	32
Divorce	33
Adaptation	36
School and a Sense of Belonging	38
Summary	48
Statement of the Problem	50
Rationale and Importance of the Research	50
Composite Null Hypotheses	52
Definition of Variables	52

Independent Variables 52
Dependent Variables 54
Limitations 54
Methodology 54
Setting 54
Subjects 55
Instruments 55
Psychological Sense of School Membership . . . 55
Personal Attribute Inventory - Family 56
Design 58
Data Collection Procedures 59
Research Procedure 59
Data Analysis 60
Results 60
Discussion 69
Summary 69
Related Literature and Results of Present Study . . 71
Generalizations 72
Implications 72
Recommendations 73
References 74

List of Tables

Page

Table 1: A Comparison of Mean Psychological Sense of School Membership Scores of Adolescents According to Gender, Family Structure, and Quality of Family Life Employing Three-Way Analysis of Variance (General Linear Model) 62

Table 2: A Comparison of Mean Psychological Sense of School Membership Scores of Adolescents According to Classification, Family Structure, and Quality of Family Life Employing Three-Way Analysis of Variance (General Linear Model) 64

Table 3: A Comparison of Mean Psychological Sense of School Membership Scores of Adolescents According to Length of Residency, Family Structure, and Quality of Family Life Employing Three-Way Analysis of Variance (General Linear Model) 68

List of Figures

Page

Figure 1: The Interaction between the Independent Variables Family Structure and Quality of Family Life and the Dependent Variable Psychological Sense of School Membership . . 65

LIST OF APPENDICES

		Page
Appendix A:	Letter to Dr. Thomas Parish	81
Appendix B:	Letter to Dr. Carol Goodenow	83
Appendix C:	Letter to Mrs. Davidson	85
Appendix D:	Memo to Seminar Teachers	87
Appendix E:	Instructions & Demographic Sheet	89
Appendix F:	Psychological Sense of School Membership Inventory	91
Appendix G:	Personal Attribute Inventory - Family . .	93

Abstract

The purpose of the researcher was to investigate adolescents' feelings of belongingness. The following independent variables were investigated: family structure, quality of family life, gender, classification, and length of residency. The dependent variable was scores from the Psychological Sense of School Membership scale. The sample consisted of 349 high school students. Three composite null hypotheses were tested employing three-way analysis of variance (general linear model) at the .05 level of significance. A total of 15 comparisons were made plus 6 recurring. Of the 15 comparisons, 5 were for main effects and 10 for interactions.

Of the 5 main effects, 3 were statistically significant at the .05 level. The following main effects were statistically significant at the .05 level:

1. the independent variable quality of family life and the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership,

2. the independent variable classification and the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership, and

3. the independent variable length of residency and the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership.

The results indicated the following for main effects:

students who had the highest quality of family life reported a mean Psychological Sense of School Membership score statistically higher than students at levels 3 and 4 of quality of family life,

2. students who were seniors had statistically higher mean Psychological Sense of School Membership scores than freshmen, and

3. students who had lived in the community always and 2 or more years had statistically higher mean scores than those who had lived in the community less than 2 years. Of the 10 interactions, one was significant at the .05 level. The following interaction was statistically significant: the independent variables family structure and quality of family life for the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership.

The results of the present study appear to support the following generalizations:

1. seniors have greater feelings of belonging than freshmen,

2. students who had lived in the community all their lives and 2 or more years have greater feelings of belonging than those who lived in the community less than 2 years,

3. family structure and quality of family life should be interpreted concurrently, and

4. students have above typical feelings of belonging.

Introduction

Self and Self-Esteem

The self is a "complex and dynamic system of beliefs which an individual holds true about himself, each belief with a corresponding negative or positive value... characterized by harmony and orderliness" (Purkey, 1970, p. 7). Chubb and Fertman (1992) cited Carl Rogers' belief that self-regard and self-acceptance, in congruence with one's ideal self, specifically define one's total cognitive behavioral self-concept. A discrepancy between one's real and ideal self is thought to be the basis for psychological distress. Acceptance of self requires an individual to acknowledge all the facts about oneself without judging approval or disapproval, but simply accepting what is. Results of Chubb et al.(1992) study (n=236) indicated that, once established, self esteem and self concept are resistant to change.

There is a variety of research on the study of self. Awareness of self was at first thought of as spirit, psyche or soul. Freud, in the early 1900's, and later his daughter, Anna, established the concept of ego development and functioning to capture this idea. In the 1930's, George Mead made self a major concept of his theoretical writing on the philosophy of society by describing how the self is developed through transactions with the environment, concluding that personality is determined by social-

psychological factors. In the 1940's, Murphy discussed the origins and modes of self-enhancement and how the self is related to the social group (Purkey, 1970). Kagan's (1990) work on the development of self suggested that social connectedness is part and parcel of the human experience, and so the development of self-identity is not simply one of individuation or separation from others, but rather involves the reconstruction of the relationship between self and others in a life-long process (Bryant, 1988).

Much research is devoted to the controversy over nature or nurture - which has the predominant influence on the human attainment of self? Both camps obviously deserve merit. For reasons of brevity, the present researcher selected to discuss the issue from the standpoint of the effect of nurture on the self, particularly as regards meeting the human need of belonging. Adolescents' sense of belonging is addressed from the standpoint of self-regard and the influences of family, peers, and school. Each factor has an individual and inter-related influence on a child's fulfillment of that sense of belongingness so crucial to a healthy sense of self.

Self and a Sense of Belonging

Maslow (1968) stated that most neuroses involved ungratified wishes for belongingness and that which it implies (e.g., safety, identification, attachment, and

respect). All individuals want and need to matter, to feel worthwhile. A sense of belonging is the extent to which one feels personally accepted, respected, included and supported by those in his/her environment. A sense of significance obtained from feelings of inclusion, connection and psychological membership is "one of the most basic constructs of Adlerian psychology" (Edwards, 1995, p. 191).

Not belonging is a lonely experience and children will instinctively try to alleviate the pain it brings. This is when the potential for peer group influence is strongest. Youngs (1992) found that most children will pay almost any price to belong.

Glasser's book on Control Theory conceptualized the 'need to belong' as a human need as basic as survival. He pointed out (as witnessed by depression and suicide of lonely people) that this human need to belong can even overcome survival needs (Chubb et al., 1992). A healthy developmental process is one motivated by growth, contrasted with those motivated by basic needs.

The need to belong is necessary for a child's healthy sense of self and the building of self-esteem (Goodenow, 1991; Youngs, 1992). Social expectations are believed to play a role in the development of self. According to Chubb et al., 1992) "Identity development is influenced by perceptions of self and of self in relation to others"

(p. 388). A child's self-perceptions may be a by-product of the opinions and perceptions of others, including how others treat him/her. Conclusions about one's worth are arrived at as one experiences acceptance and rejections from significant others. Therefore, social comparison based on personal awareness (perception) is a basis for self-assessment of ability and worth and, in turn, influences behavior (Youngs, 1992, Purkey, 1970).

The way one perceives his/her own worth can easily be discerned by others because one's outer actions are motivated by the inner sense of self. One's perception influences the way one treats oneself and others and affects how much one is accepted by others. A healthy self requires an individual to have healthy unconditional self-regard (Youngs, 1992).

Each person has a biologically-based inner nature unique to him/herself motivated by basic needs. According to Maslow (1968), these needs are for safety and security, for belonging and affection, for respect and self-respect, and for self actualization. The basic drive of an individual is the maintenance and enhancement of the self. A more recent study defined six vital areas of a person's life that contribute to or detract from the acquisition of self: 1) physical safety - freedom from physical harm; 2) emotional security - the absence of intimidation and fear; 3) identity - knowing who one is; 4) affiliation -

a sense of belonging; 5) competence - a sense of feeling capable; and 6) mission - having meaning and direction in life (Youngs, 1992). When these criteria are met, a person is most likely to achieve self-acceptance and positive self-esteem.

In the healthy development of a human being, there is a dual need for support (belonging) and autonomy. This means each individual requires a workable distribution between social support and meaningful connection, and independence. "Human experience of identity has two elements: a sense of belonging and a sense of being separate" (Minuchin, 1974, p.47). According to Maslow (1968), the needs for safety, belonging, love and respect can be satisfied best by other people; i.e., from outside the person, which means considerable dependence on the environment.

A child's self-image is largely built on interpretation of messages (verbal and non-verbal) from many different interactions and experiences with others. According to results of a 1994 study by Jaycox, Reivich, Gillham and Seligman (n=142), adolescents must negotiate the boundaries of their multiple worlds of family, peer group and school; the influence of all three individually and collectively contribute to the development of self-esteem.

When family, peer group and school expectations are similar to self expectations, children can move easily

across boundaries in harmony with the self. However, when difficult interactions plagued by stigmatization, stereotyping, etc. are experienced, adolescents often have faulty perceptions of themselves and the world. They are more likely to see themselves as degraded and incapable. For example, if parents emphasize school achievement, but friends devalue good grades, adults assume young people incorporate and manage these conflicting perspectives while deciding on their own course of action. However, children with low self-esteem lower expectations for their own performance and fulfillment, which may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy (Phelan, Davidson and Cao, 1991). Low expectations leading to low achievement will lead to low self-esteem. These children show cyclical negative self-evaluation, dysfunctional attitudes, hopelessness, loneliness and impaired social ability.

Aspects of personal identity and self-regard in adolescence have been explored through family as well as peer relationships. "In all cultures, the family imprints its members with selfhood" (Minuchin, 1974, p. 47). Research documents high correlation between one's self-regard and the significant regard of family (Betz, Wohlgemuth, Serling, Harshbarger and Klein, 1995; Cooper, Holman and Braithwaite, 1983; Hetherington, 1991; Kurdek, Fine and Sinclair, 1994; McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994; and Steinberg, 1987). In fact, in studies of reported self-

regard among adolescents, results show that parents are by far the most frequently mentioned contributors to unconditional self-regard (Betz et al., 1995; Purkey, 1970).

If self-worth is predicated first and foremost by the amount of respectful, accepting and concerned treatment that an individual receives from the significant other(s) in his/her life, and one's self-concept is bound by one's perceptions of the attitudes of significant others, self-esteem will be inherently affected by perceptions of closeness to family (Cooper et al., 1983). Children develop an initial sense of worth from the family relationship, followed by peer and societal relationships. Self-regard is therefore a product of messages from others about one's personal worth as a person.

Peer Acceptance and a Sense of Belonging

Societal changes of the last few decades increased the prominence of peers in children's lives. "Today's children begin to enter organized peer groups at earlier ages (e.g., day care) and remain in age-segregated schools for more years than their cohorts of yesteryear" (Hymel and Rubin, 1985, p.251). Also, the overwhelming media influence on youth fosters age segregation by targeting specific age groups in commercial advertising and the entertainment industry, creating values and experiences which are uniquely age-specific and age-biased.

Adolescents with a healthy self-regard more easily achieve peer acceptance and are sought out by others. Goodenow (1993) stated that the need for belonging, social support, and acceptance take on special prominence during adolescence, because that is when "young people begin to consider seriously who they are and wish to be, with whom they belong, and where they intend to invest their energy and stake their futures" (p. 81), and

> the heightened self-awareness of self-consciousness that accompanies the cognitive change in adolescence (away from egocentric thinking of childhood) might have significant negative implications because it increases young people's sense of public exposure and thus their potential for embarrassment and shame. (p. 23)

This sense of heightened awareness of the intricacies of relationships with others combine to make "a social context in which sense of belonging, personal acceptance, and social-emotional support are both crucial and problematic" (p. 25).

Peer acceptance becomes increasingly more important as children move developmentally through adolescence. (Byrnes and Yamamoto, 1983; Brown, 1990; Carlson, Lahey and Neeper, 1984; Phelan et al. 1991; Bryant, 1988). According to Youngs (1992), being with others reflects and reinforces

one's own human need for warmth, caring and connection.

Research results indicate that perceptions of sense of belonging are often more important than reality in influencing the actions and feelings of an individual (Chubb et al., 1992; Cooper, et al., 1983). Such studies as Curtis and Miller (1986), who falsely led subjects to believe another liked or disliked them, led subjects to actually be liked or disliked. In other words, belief led to behaviors promulgating likability (e.g., the amount of self-disclosure, tone of voice, amount of agreement and disagreement) which led to reciprocal behavior on the part of others. Apparently, self-regard and personal expectations for oneself are crucial to perceived likability and hence, actual likability. People high in self-perceived likability are generally more liked than those whose self-perception is negative. Also, people reciprocate another's anticipated behavior when they believe it is not modifiable. When a person believes another has a negative evaluation of him/her, he may subconsciously accept it as unlikely to be changed and so an 'expectancy confirmation' occurs, and this belief that one is disliked actually contributes to one's own discrimination. Persons who believe they are disliked apparently "focus on how they are different from others and disagree with others perhaps in an attempt to understand why they are disliked or to make others' evaluation less painful" (Curtis et al., p. 289).

In a study by Berndt (1988), individuals who perceived that they belong report that even when they do not specifically ask for or receive peer support, they perceive its existence and availability. Social support is usually obtained automatically as a by-product of close relationships. "If obtaining support from friends depends primarily on having friendships, then the determinants of friends' support should correspond to the factors influencing the formation and maintenance of friendships..." (p. 321). Social anxiety may cause individuals to have a bias towards recognizing other's actual emotional expressions towards them - discrimination is difficult between positive and negative emotional states of others.

According to Bryant (1988), Americans' obsession with individualism and personal autonomy may be influencing the breakdown of connectedness in our society. "Without a clear involvement in a meaningful social network, individuality and life itself lose meaning" (p. 333). Definitions of mental health continue to stress the human need for connectedness to others and a sense of belongingness. A sense of mutual reciprocity or healthy interdependence is ideal.

Peer groups serve as reference groups for adolescents' actions and attitudes and collectively influence their judgment. These reference groups set standards for

acceptable behavior, serve as role models, and become an audience from whom recognition is desired (Durbin, Darling, Steinberg and Brown, 1993).

Variables associated with family background may place a child at risk for alienation from peers. In a study by Patterson, Vaden and Kupersmidt (1991), the probability of rejection by peers was found to be greatest for children subjected to high levels of family stress, although some high risk children remain resilient under stress and achieve acceptance among peers.

Youngs (1992) maintained that:

> belonging (being a part) is filled with customs, rituals, and rules, all part of a dance for acceptance. Being left out is painful, so many children will go along with anything. But group membership is not automatic and the rules for belonging are always changing. Rules that worked in early childhood don't work in adolescence, where even rules among friends change regularly. (p. 101)

Several researchers delineated specific subgroups of adolescents who do not belong to any peer group (Asher and Dodge, 1986; Carlson et al., 1984; Hagborg, 1994; Hymel et al., 1985; Kagan, 1990; Parker et al., 1987; and Patterson et al., 1991). Much attention has been given to the long-term unfavorable outcomes associated with their detachment.

Some have been labeled by their types of social problems, specifically, the neglected and rejected, who can be characterized as isolated, withdrawn, impulsive, and/or aggressive.

Social isolates who lack friends, but are not necessarily disliked (simply overlooked), are neglected. Neglected adolescents characterized in the study by Byrnes et al. (1983) revealed high external locus of control.

> Many not only had poor self-images, but also appeared to feel that there was little they could do to change either themselves or their environments. This orientation of looking outside oneself for structure and motivation, matched with low self-esteem and the tendency to withdraw has worked to seal these children off from their peers. (p. 23)

These neglected children are virtually invisible - they seek no attention perhaps in an effort to minimize the probability of blatant rejection. Byrnes et al. suggested their passivity and withdrawal are evidence of having given up hope in their own ability to bring about change or affect others.

In contradistinction, social isolates who are overtly disliked are actively rejected. Patterson, Kupersmidt, and Vaden (1990) found that children from families subject to

multiple chronic adversities were more likely than other children to be rejected by their peers. Asher et al. (1986) found that rejected adolescents were more likely to remain unaccepted in all group settings, were more aggressive and disruptive, were more lonely, and were more likely to experience serious adjustment problems later in life. Retaliation is often the protective response.

According to Jaycox et al. (1994), vulnerable children with poor cognitive competence, behavior problems, family problems, or difficult temperaments are at risk of becoming social isolates. The consequences of alienation may be severe, exacerbating depressive symptoms, low self-esteem and social ineptness which further aggravate poor peer relations. Adolescents whose parents are warm and accepting (e.g., highly responsive) value interpersonal relationships and align themselves with peers who share this value and achieve healthy peer acceptance (Durbin et al., 1993).

Orientation toward specific groups and subcultures is largely determined by the manner in which the adolescent has been socialized, particularly to the style of parenting to which he/she has been exposed. Findings by Durbin et al. (1993) suggested "parenting styles influence adolescents' values, as well as the behaviors they view as appropriate and the classmates they view as a reference group" (p. 97).

Family Environment and a Sense of Belonging

Family relationships. Family environment significantly determines children's social development. For example, Chubb et al. (1992), concluded that "during this period of changing family structures and unprecedented media influence on adolescent identity development, it is important not to lose sight of the significance of the family to the adolescent" (p. 388).

To set the stage for healthy separation, according to Rigby (1993), "the first arena in which a child develops relationships with others, relationships that are essential for survival, is within the family" (p. 387). The quality of care received from the earliest days has a fundamental influence on the way one sees him/herself and the world (Purkey, 1970). From this conception of self derived from the family, a child then expands as a person, after being influenced by repeated interactions within the family.

Healthy relationships with adults are crucial; when the adults in one's life are either physically or emotionally distant from a child, the overwhelming need to belong impels the adolescent to turn for acceptance to others (e.g., peers). The need for family security continues throughout life, and "although the importance of peers increases during adolescence, children still need their family as a foundation" (Goodenow, 1993, p. 387). The adolescents' world expands to include peers as they develop, but "the

foundation for how the adolescent perceives and negotiates the world are lain within the context of the family" (p. 391).

Affiliation. Adults help children build a sense of affiliation with others (Youngs, 1992). According to Parke and Bhavnagri (1988), families influence their children's peer relationships in a variety of ways, both directly and indirectly. Even when the parents' goal is not explicitly to direct the child's relationships with others, the nature and quality of the ongoing parent-child relationship will nevertheless indirectly impact their child's ability and style of peer interaction. Parke et al. further ascertained that:

> Active parental influence on children's peer competency is seen when parents explicitly select, modify, or structure the child's physical and social environment in order to enhance the child's peer relationships; e.g., parents as arrangers of opportunities, such as providing safe neighborhoods, organizing activities and enrolling their children in activities with other children. (p. 242)

Parents often directly monitor and/or supervise their children's interactions with peers in order to "facilitate the development of the children's social skills" (Parke et

al., p. 242).

For example, results of a 1990 California State Department of Education study indicated that "the family is the incubator of self-esteem and the most critical unit in a child's life and development" (Goodenow, 1993, p. 391). Further, "the manner in which young people interact with each other is strongly influenced by the working model of relationships they internalize as a result of their experiences in their own families" (Rigby, 1993, p. 502).

Communication. According to Byrnes et al. (1983), "the general family atmosphere and the communicative processes within it are probably the main determinants of a child's vulnerability to becoming a social isolate" (p. 23). Research results of Purkey (1970) and Steinberg (1987) indicated that the emotional climate of the family and involvement in decision-making were more pertinent than economic or social factors in determining an adolescent's social self-satisfaction and acceptance. For this reason, Purkey pointed out that "the emotional press toward low self-esteem can exist in both advantaged and disadvantaged families" (p. 36).

Parental belief systems and expectations, which often fuel parent-child interactions, may be implicit and commonly change with each experience (Scott-Jones, 1984). The existence of "bidirectional influence (e.g., parents influence the child and vice versa) implies that each child

can be affected differently by the same family environment" (p. 283).

Cooper et al. (1983) and Youngs (1992) found children from cohesive families were less likely to report conflict and were more likely to report having fun with their families. Children in cohesive families perceived close ties between themselves and the family unit and experienced acceptance, approval, and support from their rich home environment. In contrast, children who felt criticized and isolated within their family system, or perceived division between their parents (which necessitated more allegiance to one parent than the other), or children who perceived the existence of one cohesive group formed by the adults in the home and another by the children, were reported in both studies to have much less family support and an ineffectual home environment.

According to Chubb et al. (1992), Maslow (1968), and Steinberg (1987), perception of belonging in one's family is important to human development and will affect personality development by generalizing to other perceptions of belonging outside the family (e.g., one's school, peers, community). It will thus directly influence behavior. Belonging in families is defined as perceiving oneself on an equal basis with other family members, and adolescents who feel that they belong in their families differ from

adolescents who do not feel a sense of family belonging. "The need for peer acceptance does not replace the role of family for an adolescent" (Chubb et al., p. 391).

Time. Chubb et al. (1992) used six variables to measure a sense of belonging in families: self-esteem, locus of control, sense of belonging in school, sense of belonging in the community, time spent with the family, and level of involvement in school and community activities. They ascertained that a positive relationship exists between the amount of time spent in the home environment and the adolescents' perception of a general sense of well-being. Adolescents will spend more time among those with whom they can communicate and feel comfortable, so those with a stronger sense of belonging in their families voluntarily spend more time with them (Chubb et al, 1992). Conversely, alienation at home increased time spent with peers. Students who felt belonging in their families were found to have a higher level of involvement in school and community activities, perhaps because their sense of belonging and family support allowed them to take more risks in the world beyond the family.

Research results (Cooper et al., 1993; Hetherington, 1991; Hopkins and Klein, 1993; Kleinman, Handal, Enos, Searight, and Ross, 1989; McLanahan et al., 1994; and Rigby, 1993) show that students who considered themselves family-oriented had higher self-esteem, better peer relations, and

higher motivation and achievement. Positive attitude and harmonious relations with family were significantly associated with children's tendencies to act prosocially with peers and not to engage in deviant behavior.

Support. Investigation of a dimension of family environment known as 'quality of family support' (QFS) has been given much attention lately (Cohn, Patterson and Christopoulos, 1991; Dunn and Tucker, 1993; Forman and Forman, 1981; Kleinman et al., 1989; McCombs and Forehand, 1989; and McLanahan et al., 1994). QFS taps aspects of families' interpersonal relationships as perceived by family members. The difference in children's adaptive functioning and maladaptive behavior is clearly associated with the quality of family support. "Family support has been hypothesized to mediate stress for children in general and to be related to positive scholastic self-concept" (McCombs et al., 1989, p. 872).

Dunn et al. (1993), using Moos' Quality of Family Support instrument (n=107), found that the quality of family support can be measured in three dimensions: 1) cohesion - help and commitment of family members to one another; 2) expressiveness - the degree to which family members act openly and express feelings; and 3) conflict - disparity among and between members of the family. Dunn et al. (1993) postulated that family cohesion and expressiveness were

mostly indicative of white middle-class adolescents' psychosocial health and that family conflict was the greatest predictor of maladaptive behavior in the black adolescent sample.

Rigby (1993) used the Family Functioning in Adolescence Questionnaire (FFAQ), a 42 item Likert-type scale developed by Roelefse and Middleton, to assess psychological health of families (n=1,012). He determined that positively functioning families had: 1) clear, but permeable boundaries; 2) a broad range of affective expressiveness; 3) clear and direct communication between members; 4) a democratic pattern of behavior control; and 5) value transmission of ethical standards from parent to child.

In the Kleinman et al. (1989) study (n=966), family climates which were revealed to be "perceived as high in cohesion and recreational activities, and low in conflict, are conducive to less distress and better adjustment for adolescents of all ages and sexes" (p 358). Forman et al. (1981) evaluated high school students (n=80) and found association between overall comfort with perceived belonging in school and family environment (family environment variables measured were: family cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, achievement orientation, intellectual/cultural orientation, active recreational orientation, moral/ religious emphasis, organization and control).

The importance of family support was also documented in a study by Marsh (1990), who concluded that an adolescent's perceived sense of belonging in the family is more pertinent than perceptions of other family members or outsiders; e.g., one's own perception of belonging defines one's personal interactional style with others. If one perceives family support to be inadequate, his/her social relations with peers, along with one's personal sense of worth, inevitably deteriorate.

The research results of Purkey (1970) strongly suggested that a child's level of self-regard was closely related to the caretaker's (parent's) level of regard for him/her, and that these expectations of significant others were internalized into self-perception. Rigby (1993) contended that delinquent youths perceived their families as less warm, expressive or cohesive than control groups of non-delinquents, and their aggressive behavior was determined by be a direct result thereof.

Family resources. According to Berndt (1988), social environments are prescribed by parents because they choose where the family will live and one's neighborhood largely determines peer interaction patterns. Accessibility to neighborhood resources is an important correlate of socioemotional functioning; children who can easily access community resources such as structured and unstructured

activities at formally sponsored organizations were higher in their acceptance of individual differences and perspective-taking.

Cooper et al. (1983) and Steinberg (1987) claimed that to focus solely on disruption within families when looking at different types of families "denies the existence of other family relationships" (Cooper et al., p. 158), particularly quality of family support within each type. In McLanahan and Sandefur's 1994 book, examples are provided of both single parents and married parents who are heavily involved in their children's school work and whose children are doing unusually well in school. They contended that one's success potential is often much more determined by the nature of parental support than by the number of parents in the household.

Cooper et al. (1983) indicated that cohesion within the family unit has paramount influence on the development of the self. Minuchin (1974) maintains:

> Where children perceive conflict between parents or between themselves and their parents, lower self-esteem can be expected. As the child and the family grow together, the accommodation of the family to the child's needs delimits areas of autonomy that he experiences. (p. 48)

Meaningful significant others (the family) impart perceptions (whether congruent or incongruent) of the self

(Purkey, 1970). Families are supportive when all members believe that through their own efforts and behaviors, desired ends will be achieved; these families have internal locus of control and do not consider themselves controlled by fate or any all-powerful dictates of society (Chubb et al., 1992).

Non-cohesive family environments (low quality of support) are characterized by high levels of negative affect, conflict, and unsatisfactory conflict-resolution styles. According to Cooper et al. (1983), these families employ verbal or physical attacks, power assertion, or withdrawal rather than compromise or resolution, and parents were most likely to be disengaged and ineffectually authoritarian. Children isolated within their families (no cohesion or support) have inadequate social relationships with their peers, teachers, etc., and then, cyclically, these poor social relations may create parent-child conflict as they are reflected at home. Non-cohesion can also occur if there is too little parent-child interaction or if the quality of the time is in some way marred (Scott-Jones, 1984).

The contribution of close positive relationships with mothers has been emphasized in research (Betz et al., 1995; Hetherington, 1991; Hopkins et al., 1993; McCombs et al., 1989; McLanahan et al., 1994; and Weltner, 1982). These

studies emphasized the positive relationship between maternal warmth and engagement to friendly prosocial behavior of children with their peers. Hopkins et al. (1993), using Buri's Parental Nurturance Scale with 207 students (male and female), found level of global self-worth and social satisfaction associated with level of mothers' nurturance (Buri defined nurturance as: warmth, support, love, approval, attention, and concern).

The influence of parents remains strong in adolescence (Purkey, 1970). Parental warmth, respectful treatment, and clearly defined limits let adolescents know their parents care for them and that they belong.

Parenting approaches. Several current researchers have studied the influence of different parenting styles (Durbin et al., 1993; Kurdek et al., 1994; Rigby, 1993). According to Durbin et al., parents consciously and subconsciously influence their youngsters' reference group orientation while shaping their values and attitudes. This occurs directly when parents monitor standards for acceptable conduct, maintain limits and encourage participation in some activities and discourage participation in others; indirect influence occurs as parents model and practice social interactions that may facilitate or hinder the development of relationships with others.

For example, Durbin et al. (1993), using Baumrind's 1985 family typology, investigated parenting styles among

European-American high school adolescents (n=3,407 9th through 12th graders). They defined styles of parenting categories as: 1) authoritative (high acceptance/involvement and high firm control/demandingness); 2) authoritarian (low acceptance/involvement and high firm control/demandingness); 3) indulgent (high acceptance/ involvement and low firm control/demandingness; and 4) uninvolved (low on both variables). According to Durbin et al.,

> Adolescents who characterized their parents as authoritative were more likely to be oriented toward well-rounded crowds that rewarded both adult- and peer-supported norms (i.e., 'jocks', 'normals', 'populars', and 'brains'). Girls, particularly, and to some extent boys, who characterized their parents as uninvolved were more likely to be oriented toward crowds that did not endorse adult values (i.e.., the 'druggies' and 'partyers'), and boys who characterized their parents as indulgent were oriented toward a fun-culture crowd (i.e., 'partyers'). (p. 87)

Non-traditional families. According to Rigby (1993), the term 'family' may cover a wide variety of living arrangements and is defined subjectively. Goodenow (1991) maintained that the most important family ingredients are

respect, encouragement and acceptance in a consistent, stable family environment, whatever its composition may be.

Dawson (1991) reported on the 1988 National Health Interview Survey on Child Health (NHIS-CH), which was a large nationally representative sample of children (n=17,110) for which various measures of health (physical health, school performance and emotional well-being) were compared for different types of families. She found "an intact marriage is no guarantee of an emotionally healthy, well-supervised home environment " (p.574), and that alternative family structures (those other than two biological parents) are not always associated with adverse outcomes in children. Dawson also pointed out that "most of the studies that attempt to assess affects of family structure on children's well-being are a decade or more old" (p. 574). Cohesion was found to be more important than simply the presence of two adults.

Patterson et al. (1991) analyzed conduct and peer relations of 868 black and white adolescents from two-parent and one-parent, mother-headed homes. Four independent variables were used: income, ethnicity, gender, and household composition. Household composition in and of itself was not found to be a predictor of conduct or peer relations. Despite the well-known associations among these variables, income level and gender were found to be the best overall predictors of social competency.

Child care functions typically have been relegated to the mother in two-parent families in which fathers may interact relatively little with their children; thus, the distinction between two-parent and one-parent families in terms of active participation may not be so sharply different (Scott-Jones, 1984). "An additional adult in the family may not necessarily result in more adult-child interactions" (p. 269). The quality, not quantity, of relationship determines sense of belonging within a family structure.

Marsh (1990) examined the effects of change in family structure (n=14,825), challenging the 'deficit family model', in which it is hypothesized that:

> variations in the nuclear family will produce undesirable deviations in children's personality, social behavior and school success. There is growing recognition that all families have strengths and weaknesses, and that these may have more to do with outcomes experienced by children than does family configuration. (p.327)

Marsh further maintained that the disruption of a stable configuration may be responsible for the lowering of some achievement in children from recently divorced families rather than blaming it on disruption of the family configuration, as both two-parent families and single-mother

families that had not been recently disrupted showed no lowering of achievement. Additionally, Rigby's (1993) study failed to show that "family intactness was associated with a mode of relating to peers" (p. 509). Steinberg's (1987) results indicated that as far as family structure goes, the 'biological intactness' hypothesis received marginal support and the 'additional adult' (e.g., step parent) hypothesis received no support for either boys or girls.

The number of children who live in one-parent families has increased dramatically in the past few years, accompanied by a decrease in negative societal attitudes. Differences among one-parent families make simple comparisons between one- and two-parent families misleading (Scott-Jones, 1984).

Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, and Fernandez (1989) stated that "diversity is often buried in the quantitative data and stereotypes typically used to describe this population" (p. 58). In fact, Hetherington (1991) suggested that children in two-parent families with parental conflict have as many or more problems as children whose parents live separately.

Father absence. Dunn et al. (1993) postulated that an adolescent's adaptive functioning did not necessarily improve with the mere presence of a father, and warned "against assuming that father figures' absence has a negative impact on children" (p. 80). In Marsh's (1990)

study of the effects of father absence on juvenile delinquency, academic achievement, and adjustment, matching control/comparison groups for socioeconomic status and cultural background was necessary. Given the stereotyped beliefs remnant of the 1960's, their most important conclusion may have been "however inconclusive present evidence may be, there is firm basis for rejecting blanket generalizations about the consequences of father absence. Its behavioral and psychological effects are probably much less uniform and much less uniformly handicapping than is widely assumed" (p. 327).

In single-parent mother-headed successful families, the mother's position of authority is confirmed. Where there have been fathers at home who provided confirmation of mother's authority, difficulties may arise when, "in the absence of such confirmation, single parents often compromise their definition of reality with a child whose basic reality orientation may be quite faulty" (Weltner, 1982, p. 204). Even seemingly inconsequential disagreements can lead to large problems if lack of validation leaves the single parent a less effective and less powerful leader of the family.

Single parenting becomes problematic if such essential parenting functions as setting limits and providing advice and nurturance to a child are compromised when the parent

does not "have the emotional reserves to maintain a parental position" (p. 204). Single parenting is often better effected if mother establishes appropriate outside contact (e.g., relationships with peers, dates, and members in organizations and small communities) which anchor her in the adult world and assist her in providing emotional, financial, and transportation resources that would support her child's movement into an appropriate peer system and not foster mother/child enmeshment.

According to McLanahan et al (1994), "when a father lives in a separate household, he is usually less committed to his child and less trusting of the child's mother. Hence, he is less willing to invest time and money in the child's welfare" (p. 3).

Steinberg (1987) reported that youngsters (n=109 male and female adolescents) growing up in the presence of an additional non-biological adult (e.g., step-parent) were equally at risk for involvement in deviant behavior as were those growing up in a single-parent household. Apparently, the presence of an additional adult is mainly helpful if the single parent had inadequate control over the children.

Socioeconomic status. The effects of low socioeconomic status (SES) and family functioning have been well documented (Dawson, 1991; Dunn et al., 1993; Marsh, 1990; McLanahan et al, 1994; Patterson, Kupersmidt, and Vaden, 1990; and Wehlage et al., 1989). According to McLanahan

et al.,

> Low income and the sudden drop in income that often is associated with divorce is the most important factor in children's lower achievement in single-parent homes, accounting for about half of the disadvantage. Inadequate parental guidance and attention and the lack of ties to community resources account for most of the remaining disadvantages. (p. 3)

She further noted that:

> in a market economy such as the U.S., economic well-being is fundamental to all other forms of well-being. Economic success is the ability to support oneself at a standard of living above the poverty line...psychological success (self-esteem and control over one's life) is more difficult to achieve and maintain when a person is dependent for basic needs. (p. 19)

Marsh (1990) pointed out that parent-child interaction and parent's involvement with school usually decrease when SES is lowered. Results of Wehlage's (1989) study also link the instability of transition (moving) with lowered SES. According to Patterson et al. (1991) and Wehlage, children from low income families had more behavior problems than other children, regardless of family structure, race, or

gender.

Female-headed households are inordinately represented among the poor; almost half of female-headed families live below the poverty line (Patterson et al., 1991). However, Scott-Jones (1984) claimed that "traditional socioeconomic classification schemes are based on nuclear families with only the father working and may be inappropriate for single-parent families and employed females generally "(p. 273). So, although one-parent families are disproportionately represented among lower SES groups, this is partly because family income is almost always reduced with the absence of a spouse and in this instance does not necessarily result in conditions of poverty that overwhelmingly (and negatively) affect the adolescent's home life.

Conflict. Cooper et al. (1983), Jaycox et al. (1994), and Kleinman et al. (1989) postulated that the level of conflict, not the type of family structure, had the most damaging effect on children. The level of cohesiveness (versus conflict) is much more important. According to Cooper et al., one's psychological well-being is determined by the quality of family life, hence "broken homes need not yield broken lives" (p. 157).

Borrine, Handal, Brown and Searight (1991) examined two contrasting views of conflict and marital status on the adjustment effects of children. They explained that

the 'physical wholeness' position views

> divorce and subsequent remarriage and the blending of families as salient explanatory variables that adversely affect children's later adjustment through the physical dissolution of the nuclear family; the 'psychological wholeness' position views perceived current family conflict level as the critical variable that influences adjustment regardless of parental marital status. (p. 753)

Results of analysis of white adolescents (n=917) failed to support the 'physical wholeness' position; rather, results supported the 'psychological wholeness' position in adolescent adjustment.

According to Rigby (1993), "aggressiveness among children....was found to be significantly higher for children from homes in which comparatively high levels of coercive and intrusive family interactions had been observed" (p. 502). Adolescents who perceived high familial conflict, regardless of family structure, reported lower self-esteem, greater social anxiety, and less internal control (Kleinman et al., 1989).

Divorce. Criticisms of the emphasis on family structure have been widespread. "Generally, these critics argue that the impact of divorce on children cannot be

understood simply in terms of a family's physical composition - that the degree of family harmony also warrants consideration" (Cooper et al., 1983, p. 153).

According to Borrine et al. (1991) and Kurdek et al. (1994), there has been a major conceptual change recently regarding children of divorce. It is no longer the mere physical non-intactness which is seen to disadvantage children, but rather any reduction of 'quality of family life'. "The emphasis in (Kurdek's) study is on delineating the range of negative effects of a stressor (e.g., divorce) on a child's adjustment and then focusing on the correlates of good functioning in the presence of the stressor" (p. 872).

Most research on the relationship between divorce and child functioning has entailed specific areas of child maladjustment, including reduced social competence with peers. Disequilibrium occurs if during the early period following divorce and remarriage the parent's control is disrupted and the stressed parent/demanding child interaction exacerbates each other's problems. Deterioration continues if the parent becomes erratic, uncommunicative, non-supportive, and inconsistently punitive in dealing with the child (Hetherington, 1991). According to McLanahan et al. (1994), problems arise if parents "are socially disadvantaged, anti-social, and have poor parenting practices which contribute to stress in the family" (p. 195).

Some factors which contribute to adjustment of the child include: adjustment of mother, less conflict with ex-spouse, higher educational level of mother, and no intense conflict between mother and child. McCombs et al. (1989) identified a specific variable which mediated the negative effects of divorce. In a sample (n=71) of adolescents living with recently divorced mothers, results indicated that adolescent adjustment occurred more rapidly among those whose mothers responded positively to the marital transition (e.g., less or no depression after the fact). Also, Kurdek et al. (1994) contended that when the parent's style of parenting is authoritative (not permissive or authoritarian), reflecting high levels of involvement and supervision, children will adjust well to divorce regardless of SES or gender.

Other protective factors which reinforce and strengthen the child's coping efforts and contribute to long-term adjustment are: positive personality disposition of the child, supportive family milieu, and external societal/ community support systems. "Both attributes of the child and family have been found to be salient in modifying children's responses to stressful life events such as their parents marital transactions" (Hetherington, 1991, p. 165).

The quality of family support can serve either as a buffer against parental conflict and divorce, or to fuel

feelings of insecurity experienced by the child. "The quality of family relations is an important mediator of children's responses to their parents divorce and/or remarriage" (Hetherington, 1991, p. 169). Borrine et al. (1990) provided evidence that divorce is not "a uniformly handicapping event for subsequent adolescent adjustment " (p. 755).

The general transitional developmental period in the literature describes a one- to two-year adjustment period. Following this, family stability returns if the divorce is not compounded by continued stress and adversity (Jaycox et al., 1994). Some children and parents show intense and continued negative outcomes, others may show delayed effects, while some are able to cope constructively with the challenges of divorce and emerge as psychologically enhanced and exceptionally competent and fulfilled individuals. Although some children appear to be vulnerable and to develop problems in response to adversity, it is invalid to assume that outcomes of divorce are inevitably pathological (Hetherington, 1991). McLanahan et al., (1994) asserted that the majority of children of divorced families do not seem to have significant adjustment problems.

Adaptation. McCombs et al. (1989) found the most important factors in children's adjustment following divorce were the absence of observed conflict between the divorced parents and a positive mother-child relationship. Kleinman

et al.(1994), using Moos' Family Environmental Scale, postulated high perceived expressiveness in families related to adjustment following divorce. According to Kurdek et al. (1994), the differing family structures could be conceptualized in terms of the number of times a child has experienced a parenting transition; i.e., children living continuously with both biological parents have experienced no (zero) parenting transitions; children living with a divorced parent have experienced one parenting transition; and a divorced parent who remarries makes two transitions, etc. They found a negative linear relation between the number of parenting transitions experienced and adjustment. No difference was found in adjustment of children who experienced zero or one transition, but marked difference was found for additional transitions beyond that.

According to Patterson et al. (1991), problematic families were characterized as having "much conflict, little affection, and inconsistent discipline" (p. 349). They measured families' biological and life-event factors as follows: biological factors are: 1) economic difficulty; 2) absence of a parent; and 3) child lacks educational stimulation at home. Life-event factors are: 1) death in the family; 2) serious illness in the home; 3) child transferred schools; and 4) parental divorce. Patterson et al. concluded that children recommended most to a school

counselor or psychologist were dealing with one or more of these factors.

Research results clearly indicate that adolescents are influenced by sense of belonging to a specific family unit. Apparently, one's sense of personal acceptance and of having a rightful and valued place in different social contexts evolves from the basis for self, first derived and continually sculpted from within the family environment. (Chubb et al., 1992; Cohn et al., 1991; Cooper et al., 1983; Goodenow, 1993; and McLanahan et al., 1994).

School and a Sense of Belonging

School or classroom peer relations are different from those with individual friends, cliques, or groups (Goodenow, 1991 & 1993). Goodenow conceptualized psychological membership in school as involving all perceptions of supportive social and academic interactions in the school setting, the hallmarks of which are "respect, encouragement and acceptance" (1991, p. 11). A sense of belonging in school is particularly crucial to adolescents as they move through middle and high school, ironically, where class transition often makes it difficult. She stated that "a general sense of trust and belonging in school settings, then, may be needed to counter-balance a heightened sense of exposure and interpersonal risk" (p. 24).

Wehlage et al. (1989) explained that school membership

is the foundation for school engagement (i.e., active involvement in school tasks), is essential to one's healthy socioemotional development, and promotes satisfactory effort and performance. "School membership is achieved when students belong and are accepted as part of a peer group and receive the support and approval of the adults in the school" (p. 114).

Wehlage et al. (1989) acknowledged that "successful schools not only match interventions in response to differences and variations in student characteristics, they also respond to basic, deep-seated needs...; one shared by all students is the need for a sense of school membership" (p. 113). This need of students is not always being adequately met in today's middle and high schools, however.

One of the most prominent recommendations in the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's 1989 Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century was for school personnel to recognize the need "for adolescents to see themselves as valued members of a group that provides mutual support and trusting relationships" (Goodenow, 1991, p. 4). Otherwise, there is a gradual "disengagement process of which officially dropping out is only the final step" (Goodenow and Grady, 1994, p. 61). Results of analysis of 612 middle school students supported the direct relationship of sense of belonging to academic success from grade school through college.

Edwards (1995) contended that each child is concerned to find a place to belong (security). Since children spend at least six hours a day in school, it is imperative for them to achieve a place of belonging within that environment, or they may end up feeling they do not have a place anywhere in society. Maslow's (1968) 'hierarchy of needs' delineates the basic social need of belonging as a prerequisite of higher needs (e.g., the need to belong inherently precedes the need for the intrinsic value of knowledge and understanding).

Being welcomed and valued in school encourages a student's healthy self-esteem; the higher a student's self-esteem, the better able he/she is to develop and sustain nourishing relationships and find appropriate ways to respond positively with others. One can then attract and sustain friendships with others who similarly sense belonging and are working to their potential. Individuals with low self-esteem, however, tend to seek low self-esteem peers who think poorly of themselves, feel disengaged and isolated, and are generally deficient in school (Goodenow, 1991 & 1993; Goodenow et al., 1994; Youngs, 1992).

Students who fail and drop out of school often view school as unwelcoming, do not actively participate, and feel no identification with others. Information from the Center for Educational Statistics in Washington, D.C. imparts that

"a feeling of not belonging is the second leading cause of dropping out of school" (Youngs, 1992, p. 89).

According to Kagan (1990), "effective classroom learning at all grade levels logically depends on a common set of social, academic and mediational factors" (p. 113). Kagan conceptualized the classroom as equivalent to a 'culture' which is subjectively interpreted by students. So cognitive activity is social culture defined functionally in terms of students' treatment, behavior, cognition and perception.

School environments have interpersonal underworlds of social interactions which affect the entire school process negatively or positively (Byrnes et al., 1983; Goodenow, 1991; Youngs, 1992). Since most school activities are with others or in the presence of others, one's quality of relationship with those others effects virtually all school activities (Byrnes et al). Subjects like English or Social Studies require participation in open discussion and emphasize students' ability or disability to interact with others (e.g., social competence). Social development is therefore intimately related to cognitive development and achievement, according to Scott-Jones (1984), in that "knowledge and understanding are not solely the result of the development of inherent cognitive structures, but grow in part, out of social interactions with others" (p. 260).

Stevenson and Baker (1987) asserted that most social

development of children occurs within the context of school. Social interaction requires skills, and belonging can be conceptualized as the fit between the skilled individual and the group. Schools establish a series of developmental tasks requiring "new interpersonal relationships, demanding cognitive performance, and socialization of the child" (p. 1348).

Chronic low achievement is associated with low peer status (Asher et al., 1986; Asher and Wheeler, 1985; Kagan, 1990). Low achievers are often systematically isolated by classmates. Inaccurate processing of academic and social information makes them low in academics and peer status.

Hetherington (1991) found that:

> vulnerable children with poor cognitive competence, behavior problems, or a difficult temperament have these difficulties exacerbated by stress and adversity, whereas, cognitively and socially competent children (those with easy temperaments) are more able to cope and when support is present, may even be enriched by the experience...thus, the psychologically poor get poorer where the psychologically rich may get richer. (p. 166)

Some research results indicate that inclusion and support in schools may have particular importance for minority

adolescents (Steinberg, 1987) and female adolescents (Dunn et al., 1993; Goodenow, 1993).

Schools contribute to alienation in several ways. Research by Farina, Allen and Saul (1968), Kagan (1990), and Wehlage et al. (1989) examined the phenomenon of stigmatization. Results of their studies indicated that when a student is "viewed as stigmatized, he is not only evaluated less favorably and blamed for nonexistent failures, but also that people behave differently and generally less favorably toward him" (p. 170). Consideration of that stigma affects one's interactions with others. Students who are stigmatized (labeled) by teachers, according to Kagan,

> will experience qualitatively different classroom culture, and the classroom culture (subjectively defined by each student) guides the thought processes and problem-solving strategies that the students employ in that environment. One can then infer that those labeled students probably perform cognitive tasks within the classroom in special ways (e.g., deprived of appropriate social motivation and assistance). (p. 112)

Once a student is labeled, he/she rarely crosses those established boundaries within the school.

One way in which schools are likely to contribute to

alienation of certain subgroups is the stigmatization of children from single-parent homes. Single-parent homes are often identified along with poverty and ethnicity as heightening the risk of disturbances in peer relations, higher incidences of behavior problems, psychological disorders, and lower academic achievement in school. Patterson et al. (1990) pointed out that "poverty, gender, ethnicity and household composition have all been associated with various indices of school based competence, including peer relations" (p. 485).

According to Cooper et al. (1983) and Scott-Jones (1984), teacher bias exists against children from one-parent families. Results from Scott-Jones' study indicated that when asked directly how teachers expected children with divorced parents, compared to those from intact families, to perform academically and psychosocially, lower expectations were given for one-parent children on both measures. Therefore, the single parent was clearly discriminated against and not treated as a legitimate family form that serves the purposes of a family. Cooper et al. cited evidence that children's perceptions of family relations were not necessarily perceived accurately by teachers. Teachers tended to associate good family relationships with two-parent households (whether in fact they were cohesive or not) and poor family relationships for single-parent

families (regardless of level of cohesiveness). Thus, these studies discourage the usefulness of teacher evaluations for testing validity of self-report. Wehlage et al. (1989) indicated that children of one-parent home status were erroneously tagged as at-risk for dropping out because schools rely on checklists of common identifiers, and that children who do not possess these common identifiers may be ignored, although they are truly at risk for other reasons.

Kagan (1990) maintained "factors within classrooms and schools transform students at-risk into a discrete subculture that is incompatible with academic success" (p. 105). The result is a feeling of estrangement. Ethnographic studies of students at-risk concluded that the trouble deviant students create "constitutes a rational response to systematic labeling" (p. 109). All human beings name people and events in an effort to seek understanding, but student labels are evaluative and can create a permanent caste system. Edwards (1995) contended that schools foster alienation of students because even teachers often do not feel a sense of belonging in the system.

Many concerted efforts, however, are being made to improve psychological sense of school membership among students. For example, cooperative learning practices build social competence by "specifically teaching discussion and interaction skills, emphasizing respect between students and even occasionally deliberately altering the 'natural' status

structure of the class by assigning special roles to low-status and low-belonging students" (Goodenow, 1991, p. 11).

Recent emphasis may increase the perception of relevance placed on relating subject matter to the real world of peers and adults. Participating in shared educational goals contributes to sense of belonging (as well as friendliness) by establishing a positive social bond in the school. According to Kagan (1990), peer interaction was also found to significantly foster metacognition as classmates work together to solve problems and encourage critical thinking competence. The more children realize that they have things in common, the less likely they are to isolate others or themselves based on differences.

Jaycox et al. (1994) delineated a program to prevent future depressive symptoms and alienation in children who are exposed to marital conflict and low family cohesion by teaching social problem-solving to aid in resolution of problems at home and in school. Goodenow (1993) reported that a sense of well-being positively relates to the quality of students' relationships with teachers.

Hagborg (1994) pointed out the necessity of personalizing the school environment to fit the individual membership needs of students. To offset the impersonal nature of some schools, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) recommended that school-within-schools

might build supportive relationships and that smaller student-teacher ratios would foster sense of belonging for students and teachers.

The school environment has the potential to provide valuable support to parenting efforts. This likely means the development of comprehensive programs to engage the multidimensional needs of students. Increasingly, the school counselor is likely to be called upon to engage the families of students. They are challenged to develop expertise in family development in order to facilitate the fit of child with the school. Also, it may be necessary to reinvest in the developmental model in order to actively support student adaptation. This notion is aptly delineated in the Counseling Mission Statement of the Kansas Comprehensive School Counseling Program (1993) which states:

> Counseling is a program provided to assist all students in developing self-understanding, information-seeking, and decision-making skills, while fostering attitudes useful in protecting and enhancing freedom of choice. The counseling program involves a collaborate effort in providing learning opportunities for educational, personal, social, and career development for living in a multicultural society. As an integral part of the educational system, counseling programs seek to identify, organize, and coordinate

educational, community, and home/family resources directed toward implementing the mission. (p. 6)

Summary

The psychosocial development of a human being involves life-long interactions with others, beginning with the family unit and branching out to include peers, school, and society at large. Collectively these contribute to the definition one has of self and one's fit in society. A sense of belonging is the extent to which one feels personally accepted, respected, included and supported in his/her environment, at all developmental stages, from initial cognition throughout the life span. A healthy developmental process is motivated by growth, which seems to occur after such basic needs as belonging are met.

During the developmental stage of adolescence, the sense of belonging takes on special importance. In modern society, persuasions outside the family have taken on disproportionate influence in adolescent development. However, one's initial entrance into the world beyond home is strongly conceptualized through the family background. This continues to reinforce or contradict one's perception of self and affect orientations to specific groups. The degree of dissonance or ambiguity may elicit distortions in the need to belong.

This means perception of actual support is essential in

maneuvering around the roadblocks of life. Bryant (1988) pointed out that "without a clear involvement in the meaningful social network, individuality and life itself lose meaning" (p. 333). Research results (Cooper et al., 1983; Goodenow, 1991 and 1993; Hetherington, 1991; Hopkins et al., 1993; Kleinman et al., 1989; McLanahan et al., 1994; and Rigby, 1993) showed that students with positive attitudes toward and harmonious relations with family, as well as a psychological sense of belonging in school, had higher self-esteem, better prosocial peer relations, and higher motivation/scholastic achievement.

There has been an increase in the number of children whose family unit is considered 'non-traditional', but alternative family structures can no longer be associated across-the-board with adverse or pathological outcomes in children. The term 'family' covers a wide variety of living arrangements which research shows should no longer be deemed dysfunctional solely on the basis of configuration. Strong support can and does exist in single-parent homes, and differences among one-parent families make simple comparison of the virtues of all one-parent families versus all two-parent families questionable.

There is growing recognition that strengths (i.e., support and cohesion) as well as weaknesses (i.e., non-support and non-cohesion) exist in all family types. Level of conflict within a family and poverty, which both have

been shown to reduce the quality of family life, are more damaging to a child than mere physical non-intactness of the biological family.

Researchers are investigating the causes of adolescent social and academic failure and success in relation to the quality of their home life. Effective school reforms are taking into consideration the students' need to belong by working with families and communities, teaching social skills and promoting peer association and school membership. Since children spend an average of six hours per day in the school, it is essential that reform include school environments which support the students' need to feel welcomed and engaged with schoolmates and adults. For example, school counselors can provide support groups for children experiencing transitional family and social difficulties, and work toward the total relinquishing of stereotypical labeling within schools.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the researcher was to investigate adolescents' feelings of belongingness.

Rationale and Importance of the Research

A sense of belonging is vital to the well-being and fulfillment of human beings. During the transitional developmental period of adolescence, a sense of belonging is especially crucial. As school reformers move into the 21st

century and meet the needs of individuals in an ever-changing society, awareness of cultural and structural contexts is likely to help counselors, administrators, and teachers facilitate student adaptation and development.

Many studies were reported in which effects of disrupted families were examined. This researcher investigated the survivors and thrivers of traditionally-termed disrupted families and at the role quality of support plays in their adaptive functioning. Results of this study may contribute to the decrease in utilization of stereotypes.

Results of the present study provided information pertaining to the following questions:

1. Is there an association between the family structure in which the student lives and feelings of belonging?

2. Is there an association between the student's perceived quality of family support and feelings of belonging?

3. Is there an association between the gender of the student and feelings of belonging?

4. Is there an association between the grade level of the student and feelings of belonging?

5. Is there an association between the student's length of residence in the community and feelings of belonging?

School counselors can use the knowledge of the

continual interrelation of self-esteem, family support, and a sense of belonging to foster self-satisfaction, motivation and achievement. Sense of belonging in the school is directly related to academic success. Positive interactions between the worlds of school and home, and working with parents and the community will help adolescents know themselves better and feel better about themselves and the society of which they are a part.

Composite Null Hypotheses

All null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level.

1. The differences among mean Psychological Sense of School Membership scores for high school students according to family structure, quality of family life and gender will not be statistically significant.

2. The differences among mean Psychological Sense of School Membership scores for high school students according to family structure, quality of family life and classification will not be statistically significant.

3. The differences among mean Psychological Sense of School Membership scores for high school students according to family structure, quality of family life, and length of residency will not be statistically significant.

Definition of Variables

Independent Variables

Independent variables were obtained from a demographic

sheet and Personal Attribute Inventory(PAI). The following independent variables were investigated:

1. Family structure - 4 levels were determined post hoc;

   Level one = live with biological mom and dad,

   Level two = live with mom only,

   Level three = live with mom and stepdad, and

   Level four = other;

2. Quality of family life - 4 levels were determined post hoc;

   Level one = scores of 15 out of a possible 15,

   Level two = scores of 13 and 14 out of a possible 15,

   Level three = scores of 10, 11 and 12 out of a possible 15, and

   Level four = scores of 9 and below out of a possible 15;

3. Gender - two levels

   Level one = female, and

   Level two = male;

4. Classification - two levels

   Level one = freshman, and

   Level two = senior;

5. Length of residency - three levels

   Level one = always,

   Level two = two or more years, and

Level three = less than two years

Dependent Variables

Scores from the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale were employed as the dependent variable. The instrument consisted of 18 items with possible scores of 18-72.

Limitations

The following might have affected the outcome of the present study:

1. the sample was not random,
2. subjects came from one high school district in the rural midwest,
3. all information was self-reported, and
4. the sample consisted of freshman and seniors only.

Methodology

Setting

The setting for this study was seminar (study hall) classrooms from one high school located in the largest school district in northwest Kansas (9th through 12 grade student population is 972). The community is located halfway between Kansas City and Denver with an approximate population of 18,000. This city is the trade/cultural/ traveler service/medical center for the region. Other factors impacting the economy include: oil, agriculture, industry, and a university. Unemployment and poverty are

low, and at least 50% of the population are direct descendants of Volga-German immigrants. (K. Spicer, personal communication, March 4, 1996)

Subjects

The subjects for this study were high school students in 9th and 12th grade. All students present (396) filled out the questionnaire, but 46 copies were returned in unusable condition. The resulting sample size was 349, consisting of 243 freshman (124 male; 119 female) and 143 seniors (64 male; 79 female).

Instruments

Three instruments were employed. The Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) Scale was used to measure adolescents' perceived belonging in the school environment. The Personal Attribute Inventory - Family (PAI - Family) was used to measure the quality of family life. A demographic sheet developed by the present researcher was used to ascertain participants' gender, grade classification, family configuration, and length of residency in the community.

Psychological Sense of School Membership. The Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) scale was used as a measure of students' perceived belonging in the school (Appendix B). The instrument was developed by Dr. Carol Goodenow, Tufts University. The instrument is an 18-item Likert-type scale which assesses perceived liking, personal acceptance, and inclusion (Goodenow, 1993). The

modified Likert scale has a range of 1 to 4: Always (4 points), Usually (3 points), Occasionally (2 points) and Never (1 point) for possible scores of 18-72.

Reliability. Internal consistency reliability for the PSSM was computed using Cronbach's alpha as an indicator. The co-efficient varied from .771 (Spanish version) to .884.

Validity. Goodenow studied construct validity under a number of conditions in which she hypothesized that students having different levels of social standing with peers would also exhibit significantly different levels of self-reported psychological membership. A one-way analysis of variance confirmed this hypothesis: students rated as having high, medium, or low social standing were different in their PSSM scores ($F[2,451]=26.59$, $<.001$). Post hoc Scheffe tests found each of these scores to be significantly different from the others (Goodenow, 1993).

Personal Attribute Inventory - Family. The Personal Attribute Inventory - Family (PAI - Family) (Parish and Osterberg, 1985) was used as a measure of students' quality of family life (Appendix D). The instrument was developed by Dr. Thomas Parrish, Kansas State University. The scale consists of 48 adjectives, 24 positive and 24 negative. Students were asked to select 15 words which were most typical of their family. The instrument is scored by counting the number of positive adjectives selected. The

score can vary from 0 to 15 (0 representing the lowest quality of family life; 15 representing the highest quality of family life).

The first analysis of this instrument concerned participants' evaluations of their mothers. These ratings varied significantly in relation to stress, $F(1,158) = 6.03$, $p < .02$, but not in relation to family structure, $F(2,158) = 2.77$, $p > .05$. For level of stress, those who were more stressed ($M=5.56$) gave their mothers significantly more negative ratings than those who were under less stress ($M=2.32$). A significant Family Structure x Personal Stress interaction effect, $F(2,158) = 3.57$, $p < .05$, was also found in the ratings of mothers. According to the Least Squares Means post hoc analysis, the ratings of mothers by those from divorced, highly stressful backgrounds ($M=11.00$) were significantly more negative than from all other groups, whose mean scores ranged from 2.00 to 2.87.

The second analysis concerned participants' evaluations of their fathers. These ratings were found to vary only in relation to family structure, $F(2,158) = 9.42$, $p < .0001$, and not in relation to personal stress, $F(1,158) = 3.51$,

> p >.05, nor as an interaction between these two variables, F(2,158) = 1.37, p > .05. With regard to the family structure effect, the Least Squares Means post hoc analysis revealed that ratings of fathers by those from divorced families (M=13.00) were significantly more negative than those from either intact families (M=3.82) or families where the fathers had died (M=2.63). The means from these latter two groups didn't vary significantly from on another. (p. 232)

Design

A factorial status survey design was employed. The following independent variables were investigated: family structure, quality of family life, classification, gender and length of residency.

The dependent variable investigated was scores from the Psychological Sense of School Membership scale. Three composite null hypotheses were tested employing three-way analysis of variance (general linear model) at the .05 level. Each hypothesis employed the following design:

composite null hypothesis number 1, a 2 x 4 x 4 factorial design;

composite null hypothesis number 2, a 2 x 4 x 4 factorial design; and

composite null hypothesis number 3, a 3 x 4 x 4

factorial design.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher discussed the proposed proceedings with the high school counseling department, the principal, and the district assistant superintendent and received permission to conduct the study. After permission was granted, the counselors arranged date, time and place for data collection.

Classroom teachers were advised of administration proceedings by the counselor in a faculty meeting. Classroom teachers administered the instruments to all 9th and 12th graders in seminar/study hall period (class size varied from 17 to 22 students). The following instruments were administered: PSSM, PAI-Family, and the demographic sheet. The same oral instructions were read by teachers to each group. All copies of the instrument were examined for completeness. The independent variables were coded and prepared for main-frame computer analysis at Fort Hays State University.

Research Procedure

The following steps were implemented:

1. selection and delineation of the topic;
2. computer search (ERIC, Psychlit, Soclit, dissertation abstracts);
3. literature was reviewed;
4. instruments were selected;

5. permission to use instruments was obtained;
6. permission to collect data was obtained;
7. proposal was written and defended before thesis committee;
8. data were collected;
9. instruments were scored;
10. data were coded;
11. proposal was written;
12. data were computer analyzed;
13. results were compiled;
14. final report was written and defended; and
15. final report was edited.

Data Analysis

The following were compiled:

1. appropriate descriptive statistics;
2. three-way analysis of variance (general linear model);
3. Bonferroni (Dunn) *t* test for means; and
4. Duncan's multiple range test for means.

Results

The purpose of the researcher was to investigate adolescents' feelings of belongingness. The following independent variables were investigated: family structure, quality of family life, gender, classification, and length of residency. The dependent variable was scores from the

Psychological Sense of School Membership scale. The sample consisted of a total of 349 adolescents. Three composite null hypotheses were tested employing three-way analysis of variance (general linear model) at the .05 level of significance. The following designs were employed with the composite null hypotheses:

composite null hypothesis number 1, a 2 x 4 x 4 factorial design;

composite null hypothesis number 2, a 2 x 4 x 4 factorial design;

composite null hypothesis number 3, a 3 x 4 x 4 factorial design.

The results section was organized according to composite null hypotheses for ease of reference. Information pertaining to each composite null hypothesis was presented in a common format for ease of comparison.

It was hypothesized in composite null hypothesis number 1 that the differences among mean Psychological Sense of School Membership scores for high school students according to family structure, quality of family life and gender would not be statistically significant. Information pertaining to composite null hypothesis number 1 was presented in Table 1. The following were cited in Table 1: variables, group sizes, means, standard deviations, F-values, and p-levels.

Table 1: A Comparison of Mean Psychological Sense of School Membership Scores of Adolescents According to Gender, Family Structure, and Quality of Family Life Employing Three-Way Analysis of Variance (General Linear Model)

Variables	n	M*	s	F-value	p-level
Gender (A)					
Female	172	52.5	9.26	0.00	.9454
Male	177	52.4	9.67		
Family Structure (B)					
Mom & Dad	239	52.3	9.64		
Mom Only	48	53.1	7.89	0.62	.6047
Mom & Stepdad	35	53.8	10.93		
Other	27	50.9	8.54		
Quality of Family Life (C)					
1**	125	56.0[a]	8.41		
2	76	53.4[ab]	8.96	10.65	.0001
3	77	51.3[b]	9.09		
4	71	46.5[c]	9.11		
Interactions					
A X B				2.14	.0952
A X C				1.82	.1443
B X C				0.53	.8560
A X B X C				1.58	.1199

* the larger the value, the greater the sense of belonging; the possible scores and theoretical mean were 18-72, 45.

** 1 = a score of 15 out of a possible 15; 2 = scores of 13 and 14 out of a possible 15; 3 = scores of 10, 11, and 12 out of a possible 15; 4 = scores of 9 and less out of a possible 15.

[abc] difference statistically significant at the .05 level according to Bonferroni (Dunn) t-test for means.

One of the 7 p-values was statistically significant at the .05 level; therefore, the null hypothesis for this comparison was rejected. The statistically significant comparison was for the main effect quality of family life and the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership. The results cited in Table 1 indicated the following for main effects:

1. adolescents who had the highest quality of family life reported a mean Psychological Sense of School Membership score statistically higher than students at levels 3 and 4 of quality of family life, and

2. adolescents who had the lowest quality of family life had statistically the lowest mean Psychological Sense of School Membership score of any subgroup.

It was hypothesized in composite null hypothesis number 2 that the differences among mean Psychological Sense of School Membership scores for students according to family structure, quality of family life and classification would not be statistically significant. Information pertaining to composite null hypothesis number 2 was presented in Table 2. The following were cited in Table 2: variables, group sizes, means, standard deviations, F-values and p-levels.

Table 2: A Comparison of Mean Psychological Sense of School Membership Scores of Adolescents According to Classification, Family Structure, and Quality of Family Life Employing Three-Way Analysis of Variance (General Linear Model)

Variables	n	M*	s	F-value	p-level
Classification (D)					
Freshman	226	51.6[a]	9.55	3.92	.0486
Senior	123	54.0[b]	9.13		
Family Structure (B)					
Mom & Dad	239	52.3	9.64	0.30	.8247
MomOnly	48	53.1	7.89		
Mom & Stepdad	35	53.8	10.93		
Other	27	50.9	8.54		
Quality of Family Life (C)					
1**	125	56.0[a]	8.41	8.23	.0001
2	76	53.4[ab]	8.96		
3	77	51.3[b]	9.09		
4	71	46.5[c]	9.11		
Interactions					
D X B				0.27	.8496
D X C				0.64	.7611
B X C				2.58	.0538
D X B X C				1.07	.3862

* the larger the value, the greater the sense of belonging; the possible scores and theoretical mean were 18-72, 45.

** 1 = a score of 15 out of a possible 15; 2 = scores of 13 and 14 out of a possible 15; 3 = scores of 10, 11, and 12 out of a possible 15; 4 = scores of 9 and less out of a possible 15.

[a-b] difference statistically significant at the .05 level according to Bonferroni (Dunn) t-test for means.

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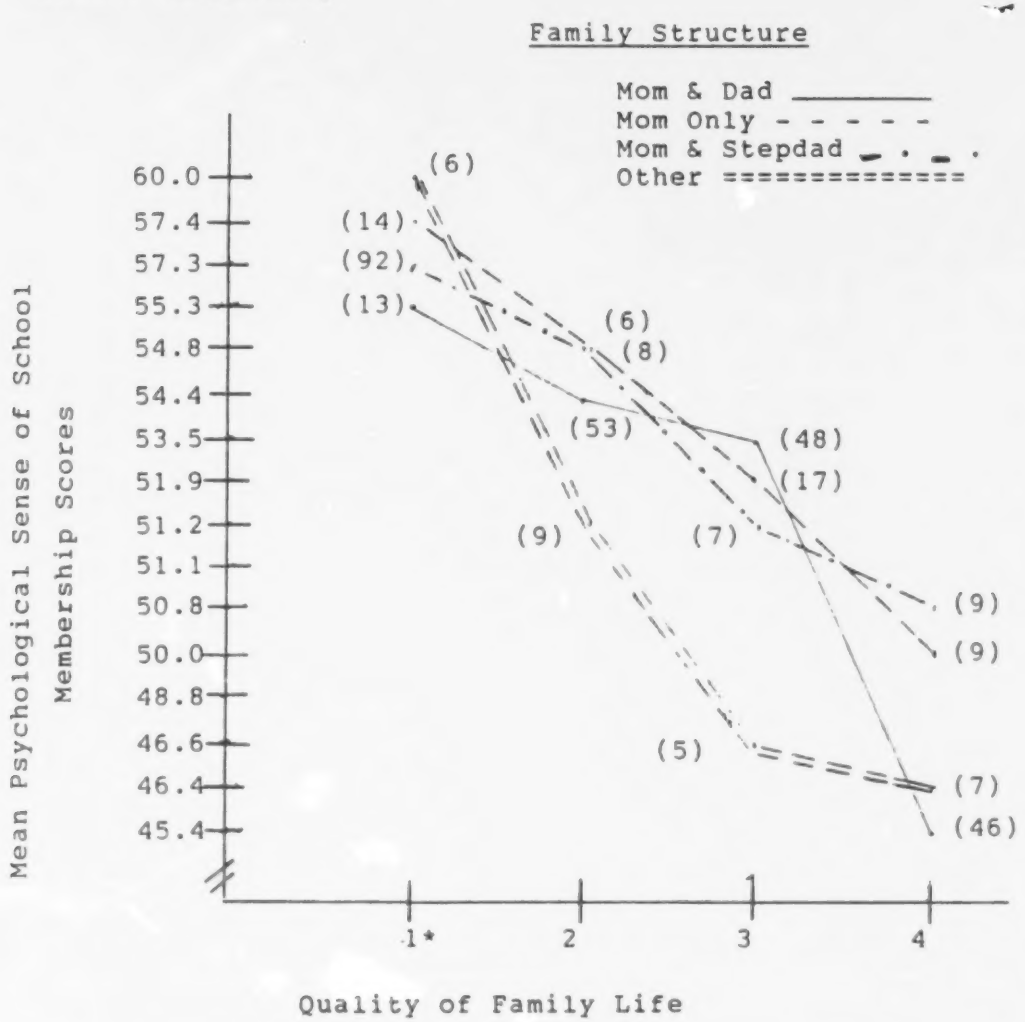
Figure 1: The Interaction between the Independent Variables Family Structure and Quality of Family Life and the Dependent Variable Psychological Sense of School Membership



* 1 = a score of 15 out of a possible 15; 2 = scores of 13 and 14 out of a possible 15; 3 = scores of 10, 11, and 12 out of a possible 15; 4 = scores of 9 and less out of a possible 15.

Three of the 7 p-values were statistically significant at the .05 level; therefore, the null hypotheses for these comparisons were rejected. Two of the statistically significant comparisons were for main effects. The following main effects were statistically significant at the .05 level:

1. the independent variable classification life and the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership, and

2. the independent variable quality of family life and the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership (recurring, Table 1).

The results cited in Table 2 indicate the following for main effects: students who were seniors had a statistically higher mean Psychological Sense of School Membership score than freshmen. The third statistically significant comparison was for an interaction. The statistically significant interaction was for the independent variable family structure and quality of family life for the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership. The interaction between family structure and quality of family life was depicted in a profile plot. Figure 1 contains the mean Psychological Sense of School Membership scores and curves for family structure.

The interaction between the independent variables family structure and quality of family life for the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership was disordinal. The results cited in Figure 1 indicated the following:

1. students from other family structure and the highest quality of family life had numerically the largest mean Psychological Sense of School Membership score of any subgroup, and

2. students living with both mom and dad and lowest quality of family life had numerically the smallest Psychological Sense of School Membership score of any subgroup, and

3. students living with mom only had numerical mean Psychological Sense of School Membership scores which decreased fairly constantly with quality of family life.

It was hypothesized in composite null hypothesis number 3 that the differences among mean Psychological Sense of School Membership scores for high school students according to family structure, quality of family life, and length of residency would not be statistically significant. Information pertaining to composite null hypothesis number 3 was presented in Table 3. The following were cited in Table 3: variables, group sizes, means, standard deviations, F-values, and p-levels.

Table 3: A Comparison of Mean Psychological Sense of School Membership Socres of Adolescents According to Length of Residency, Family Structure, and Quality of Family Life Employing Three-Way Analysis of Variance (General Linear Model)

Variables	n	M*	s	F-value	p-level
Length of Residency (E)					
Always	205	52.8[a]	9.02		
2 or More Years	118	53.5[a]	9.48	3.98	.0197
Less Than 2 Years	26	44.9[b]	9.82		
Family Structure (B)					
Mom & Dad	239	52.3	9.64		
Mom Only	48	53.1	7.89	0.81	.4905
Mom & Stepdad	35	53.8	10.93		
Other	27	50.9	8.54		
Quality of Family Life (C)					
1**	125	56.0[a]	8.41		
2	76	53.4[ab]	8.96	7.16	.0001
3	77	51.3	9.09		
4	71	46.5[c]	9.11		
Interactions					
E X B				1.53	.1694
E X C				0.42	.8630
B X C				0.54	.8439
E X B X C				0.80	.6520

* the larger the value, the greater the sense of belonging; the possible scores and theoretical mean were 18-72, 45.

** 1 = a score of 15 out of a possible 15; 2 = scores of 13 and 14 out of a possible 15; 3 = scores of 10, 11, and 12 out of a possible 15; 4 = scores of 9 and less out of a possible 15.

[ab] difference statistically significant at the .05 level according to Bonferroni (Dunn) t-test for means.

Two of the 7 p-values were statistically significant at the .05 level; therefore, the null hypotheses for these two comparisons were rejected. The two statistically significant were for main effects. The following main effects were statistically significant at the .05 level:

1. the independent variable length of residency and the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership, and

2. the independent variable quality of family life and the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership (recurring Table 1).

The results cited in Table 3 indicated the following for main effects: students who had lived in the community always and two or more years had statistically higher mean scores than those who had lived in the community less than 2 years.

Discussion

Summary

The purpose of the researcher was to investigate adolescents' feelings of belongingness. The following independent variables were investigated: family structure, quality of family life, gender, classification, and length of residency. The dependent variable was scores from the Psychological Sense of School Membership scale. The sample consisted of 349 adolescents. Three composite null hypotheses were tested employing three-way analysis of

variance (general linear model) at the .05 level of significance.

A total of 15 comparisons were made plus 6 recurring. Of the 15 comparisons, 5 were for main effects and 10 for interactions. Of the 5 main effects, 3 were statistically significant the .05 level. The following main effects were statistically significant at the .05 level:

1. the independent variable quality of family life and the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership,

2. the independent variable classification and the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership, and

3. the independent variable length of residency and the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership.

The results indicated the following for main effects:

1. students who had the highest quality of family life reported a mean Psychological Sense of School Membership score statistically higher than students at levels 3 and 4 of quality of family life,

2. students who were seniors had statistically higher mean Psychological Sense of School Membership scores than freshmen, and

3. students who had lived in the community always and

2 or more years had statistically higher mean scores than those who had lived in the community less than 2 years.

Of the 10 interactions, one was significant at the .05 level. The following interaction was statistically significant: the independent variables family structure and quality of family life and for the dependent variable Psychological Sense of School Membership.

Related Literature and Results of Present Study

The findings of the present study were consistent with previous finding concerning quality of family life and a sense of belonging. Borrine, Handal, Brown, & Searight (1991), Chubb & Fertman (1992), Cooper, Holman & Braithwaite (1983), Dunn & Tucker (1993); Durbin, Darling, Steinberg & Brown (1993), Forman & Forman (1981); Maslow (1968); McLanahan & Sandefur (1994); Patterson, Kupersmidt, & Vaden (1990), and Rigby (1993) found association between quality of family life and a sense of belonging in school.

The results of the present study supported past findings concerning classification and a sense of belonging. The studies by Marsh (1990) and Steinberg (1987) indicated an increased sense of belonging for older teens than for younger teens when both had stable and supportive family units. Maturity of the student and more permissive treatment by parents were indicated as enhancing one's perceived sense of family cohesion.

Regarding length of residency and sense of belonging,

the present researcher's findings support past research that changing schools/communities negatively impacts one's sense of belonging (Byrnes & Yamamoto, 1983; Kurdek et al (1994); McLanahan et al. (1994); Parke & Bhavnagri (1988); Patterson et al. (1991).

While the present researcher found no significant association between gender and a sense of belonging, several research findings indicated otherwise. Hagborg (1994) and Byrnes et al. (1983) indicated that girls adjusted to moving better than did boys. Dunn et al. (1993) and Goodenow (1993) showed that perceived belonging was more important to girls than boys, but the present study did not indicate any gender difference.

Generalizations

Results of the present study appeared to support the following generalizations:

1. seniors have greater feelings of belonging than freshmen,

2. students who had lived in the community all their lives and 2 or more years have greater feelings of belonging than those who lived in the community less than 2 years,

3. family structure and quality of family life should be interpreted concurrently, and

4. students have above typical feelings of belonging.

Implications

Even though the results indicated above typical sense of belonging among adolescents in this study, counseling approaches in this geographic region could still enhance individual growth and sense of membership for certain subgroups (e.g., those recent to the community). Quality of family life is significant and therefore counseling processes should consider family networking essential to the maintenance and improvement of any counseling program.

Recommendations

Results of the present study appeared to support the following recommendations:

1. the study should be replicated with a large random sample,

2. the study should be replicated at additional grade levels,

3. the study should be replicated in different size school districts, and

4. the study should be replicated in other geographical locations.

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Appendix A

Letter to Dr. Thomas Parish

November 5, 1995

Shawn Gallagher
500 E. 6th St.
Kinsley, KS 67547

Dr. Thomas S. Parish
College of Education
Bluemont Hall
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506

Dear Dr. Parish:

I am presently in the process of writing a master's thesis at Ft. Hays State University pertaining to quality of family support as an indicator of perceived social acceptance and belongingness in adolescents. In particular, I am investigating quality of family support in adaptive, functional single-parent households.

I am writing to request permission and assistance in regard to your Personal Attribute Inventory, which I feel would provide an excellent measure for reporting self and family concept. I am excited to contact you with hopes of incorporating some of your vast knowledge in this area into my research.

I would greatly appreciate a copy of the PAI long form, directions, and scoring/interpretation key, as well as any additional information you are willing to share with me which would assist in my endeavor. I plan to administer this instrument to approximately 400 9th and 12th graders at Hays High School and possibly at Kinsley High School.

I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and I anxiously await hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Shawn Gallagher

Appendix B

Letter to Dr. Carol Goodenow

November 21, 1995

Dr. Carol Goodenow
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education
350 Main St.
Malden, MA 02148

Dear Dr. Goodenow:

I appreciate the opportunity to have visited with you last week regarding your research on perceived belonging and student psychological membership. Again, finding your works was truly exciting, and will enable me to further realize my endeavors in this area. Thanks so much for your time and insight.

I received the packet today with your article about the Psychological Sense of School Membership scale and related literature. I am planning to administer the PSSM to approximately 350 9th and 12th graders sometime after Christmas break. I will keep you posted on my findings.

Sincerely,

Shawn Gallagher
500 E. 6th St.
Kinsley, KS 67547
(316) 659-2396

Appendix C

Letter to Mrs. Davidson

December 8, 1996

Dear Mrs. Davidson,

I respectfully request your permission to administer the attached instrument to a group of Hays High School 9th graders and a group of 12th graders. The information gathered will be included in my thesis without mention of school or town name. I am looking for correlation between quality of family support in non-traditional home settings and students' sense of belonging and peer acceptance. The perception of student belonging/membership seems very high here at Hays High School even though you draw from a diverse family structure population.

If this is agreeable with you, may we set a date during Seminar? Total completion time will be about 10-15 minutes.

Thank you for the opportunity to work in your school with your students, faculty, and staff.

Sincerely,

Shawn Gallagher
Counseling Practicum Student

Appendix D

Memo to Seminar Teachers

memo:

January 16, 1996

Dear Seminar Teachers:

Please administer the attached survey to your **9th and 12th Grade** students during **seminar** on **January 19.** The survey has been approved by Mrs. Davidson and by Dr. Will Roth. The survey will help Shawn Gallagher, the Counseling Practicum student, with her graduate research.

Please encourage all **9th and 12th Graders** to participate in the survey. Their identities will be completely unknown. Most students will complete the survey in about ten minutes.

Please return all completed surveys to the Counseling Office not later than the end of Seminar on January 19.

Thank you in advance for all your help.

Kathy Spicer
Shawn Gallagher

ks:pb

Enclosures

Appendix E

Instructions & Demographic Sheet

The following information is being gathered for graduate study research and will be used statistically in a thesis. Do not put your name on this questionnaire. Only numbers will be reported, so all information you provide will remain strictly confidential. If you choose to take this survey (participation is voluntary), please make sure you read carefully through each set of instructions for each of the three sections and be sure to answer all questions. If any question is omitted, the entire questionnaire must be discarded. Thank you for participating.

SECTION I

Please CIRCLE your response to each question below:

1. Sex: Male Female

2. Year in School (1995-1996): Freshman Sophomore

Junior Senior

3. Current Family Structure (** see below):

Mom & Dad Single Parent Mom

Single Parent Dad Grandparents

Mom/Stepdad Dad/Stepmom

Other

**Mom & Dad - you currently live with your biological mom & dad
Single Parent Mom - your mom is the only adult in your home
Single Parent Dad - your dad is the only adult in your home
Grandparent(s) - you live with your grandparent(s) as your guardian(s)
Mom/Stepdad - your mom has remarried and you live with her and her new husband
Dad/Stepmom - your dad has remarried and you live with him and his new wife
Other - your current living arrangement is not listed

4. Your residence in this community:

Always 2 or more years

Less than 2 years

Appendix F

Psychological Sense of School Membership Inventory

SECTION II

CIRCLE the letter below which best describes how you feel about yourself.

a. Always b. Usually c. Occasionally d. Never

a b c d 1. I feel like a real part of this school.

a b c d 2. People here notice when I'm good at something.

a b c d 3. It is hard for people like me to be accepted here.

a b c d 4. Other students in this school take my opinions seriously.

a b c d 5. Most teachers here are interested in me.

a b c d 6. Sometimes I feel as if I don't belong here.

a b c d 7. There is at least one adult in this school I can talk to if I have a problem.

a b c d 8. People at this school are friendly to me.

a b c d 9. Teachers here are not interested in people like me.

a b c d 10. I am included in lots of activities at this school.

a b c d 11. I am treated with as much respect as other students.

a b c d 12. I feel very different from most other students here.

a b c d 13. I can really be myself at school.

a b c d 14. The teachers here respect me.

a b c d 15. People here know I can do good work.

a b c d 16. I wish I were in a different school.

a b c d 17. I feel proud of belonging in this school.

a b c d 18. Other students here like me the way I am.

Appendix G

Personal Attribute Inventory - Family

SECTION III

Please read through this entire list of words before you begin. Then, PUT AN X IN THE BLANKS beside the 15 words which BEST describe your family:

_____ Afraid	_____ Angry	_____ Awkward
_____ Bad	_____ Beautiful	_____ Bitter
_____ Brave	_____ Calm	_____ Careless
_____ Cheerful	_____ Complaining	_____ Cowardly
_____ Cruel	_____ Dirty	_____ Dumb
_____ Fair-minded	_____ Foolish	_____ Friendly
_____ Gentle	_____ Gloomy	_____ Good
_____ Happy	_____ Healthy	_____ Helpful
_____ Honest	_____ Jolly	_____ Kind
_____ Lazy	_____ Lovely	_____ Mean
_____ Nagging	_____ Nice	_____ Polite
_____ Pretty	_____ Rude	_____ Selfish
_____ Show-off	_____ Strong	_____ Sweet
_____ Ugly	_____ Unfriendly	_____ Weak
_____ Wise	_____ Wonderful	_____ Wrongful